CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

Board of Management
Learning and Teaching Committee

Date of Meeting	**Tuesday 11 May 2021**
Paper No.	**LTC4-G**
Agenda Item	**5.1**
Subject of Paper	**Learning and Teaching: Covid Response**
FOISA Status	**Disclosable**
Primary Contact	**Dr Claire Carney, Vice Principal Student Experience**
Date of production	**28/4/21**
Action	**For Noting**

1. Recommendations

1.1   The Committee is asked to note key Learning, Teaching and student experience developments over the last Academic Year 2020/21 (February 2021).

2. Purpose of Paper

The purpose of the paper is to provide an update and closing note (for this academic year) on the ongoing response to Covid and impact on Learning and Teaching and student experience. It provides a timeline of events over the past academic year and the tremendous response from all levels of staff across Faculties and Directorates from across the College.

3. Context and Content

3.1   Academic planning over the course of the last year has faced a number of challenges which has been reported on as part of committee business.

- The first Committee meeting of the year was held beginning of September 2020, week 2 of the new academic term and the beginning of the new Blended model of delivery. This was following intense planning and preparation from across the college to ensure everything was in place to welcome limited numbers of students on campus for practical classes. Simultaneously, the digital mobilisation of staff and students to enable enrolment and first introductions to the college and remote delivery of classes was in progress.
- Glasgow entered Tier 4 restrictions 22 November 2020 which further limited on campus learning and teaching to those areas that where it was

judged necessary to fulfil learning outcomes, such as for subjects which require clinical, practical or a vocational/professional learning element, and to support student welfare and retention.

- Tier 4 restrictions remained in place until Christmas break when we entered full lockdown and closure of buildings from 26 December 2020. All learning, teaching and student support activity remained fully online until mid-March 2021.

- From the 15 March Scottish Government guidance allowed up to 5 % of students onsite to complete critical practical and time sensitive courses (see below for classification). This amounted to a maximum of 800 students.

- In order to navigate our way through the challenge of delivering Learning and Teaching through the restrictions associated with the pandemic, the Vice Principal Student Experience (VPSE) established a **Covid Learning and Teaching Task Group** (Chaired by Dean, Mark Stagg) with representation from across Faculties, Student Experience Directorate, Performance, HR and the Student Association. The aim was to consider separate scenarios that capture different durations of lockdown and potential impact on likely number of days available for practical delivery of classes and assessment. It identified a set of principles for prioritisation of students, e.g to complete certification and safety critical provision, maximising delivery (within restrictions) and likely costs of these and implications for learner progression. This work enabled a very quick and efficient identification of students for return on 15 March and subsequently on 19 April 2021.   4 levels of criticality:

Level 1	They require to complete the course immediately as they are in their final phase or year; non completion will result in no professional qualification or articulation
Level 2	This course can have a short term deferral (e.g. addressed in summer)
Level 3	Can be deferred to subsequent college phase or AY.
Level 4	Can be cancelled but there will be commercial implications.

- With further lifting of restrictions the college has since moved to a 29% cap on students onsite from 19 April. This equates to a maximum of 1800 students at any one time across both campuses. It is anticipated that the college would progress through 80-90% of students but the impact of the EIS strike is currently being assessed. This is an active challenge for Faculties and options have been developed in consultation with staff and the Student Association to ensure that all students progress.

3.2 The list below provides a synopsis of developments over the last year, much is considered elsewhere in the Committees supporting papers:

- **Learning and Teaching Guidance:** The principles of our new Blended Learning model have been shared with all staff by way of Learning and Teaching Guidance, this is continually updated in line with changes from Regulatory bodies and the changing nature of Covid Regulations. Currently, the College is awaiting extended and subject specific guidance from SQA for further changes to the assessment of some group awards, and the provision of an additional alternative approach to assessment.

Internal Quality Assurance panels will be established with the aim to complete all outcomes by 2 July.

- **Digital Access and Student Connectivity:** A clear priority for the college was ensuring that all learners have access to hardware they can use to access the internet and the Virtual Learning Environment. The college invested almost £1.3m on a laptop loan scheme purchasing 2000 laptops and every student who requested a college laptop, booked a slot and turned up on the day, has received a laptop. In addition, the college has also invested in the purchase of Adobe software licences for students studying in Creative Industries and some STEM areas to allow students to continue learning whilst at home. This again was a significant investment and separate to the Adobe Licence the College holds for onsite computers.

- **Digital Learning Transformation Group** – The Digital Learning Group was established in September with cross college and student representation and is co-chaired by the VPSE and the Director of Information Technology. The objective is to improve Digital capability within the College to support the creation of a learning environment where the digital capability of staff and students can flourish; where technology solutions are provided to enhance the student experience; and staff are sufficiently skilled to exploit the features of the available technologies to enhance learning. A key project of the group was to develop an options appraisal and business case for delivery for an enhanced Virtual Learning Environment for academic year 2021/22. The Executve Leadership Team and the Board Finance Committee approved the project and we have since received funding from the College Foundation to go to tender. This is a huge investment (both financially and in human resource) and a testament to the vision and direction of the College in the ongoing development of the Blended Learning model.

- **Blended learning Fund;** The Blended Learning Fund (BLF) was established in response to the challenge faced during the Covid crisis to ensure we are well placed for delivery of quality online learning and teaching experience and to "Let Learning Flourish'. The fund was subsequently supported by a successful application the Foundation. The aim was to provide additional support to learning and teaching staff in the delivery and development of the new blended delivery model. The fund application process opened end of January and received a tremendous response from across all faculties. A further essential step is to share outcomes of projects across the college via on Learning and Teaching Academy staff resource hub and through the **Learning and Teaching Conference 'Lets get Phygital' on 14 September 2021.**

- **Support for Digital Learning:** In support of digital delivery the Learning and Teaching Academy have evolved their CPD programme of activity from 'tech how to' webinars in the early days of lockdown to refocussing on more pedagogical approaches to managing and developing digital 'classrooms' and working closely with course teams to enhance delivery. The LTA also launched a sector leading Lecturer Integration programme which all new lecturers will complete when joining the College. This includes five components including digital delivery and set the standard expected from the outset. Separately, and importantly, it is planned to

host a City of Glasgow College Online Learning and Teaching Conference (on agenda 5.4) this academic year.

1. Impact and Implications

1.1 Covid restrictions impacted severely on delivery of practical teaching and onsite support for students.

1.2 Extended restrictions have had a significant impact on practical areas and whilst we can now have 29% of students on site, the biggest limitation is physical distancing and the availability of space to work with small groups of students. The resulting impact is that we will have potentially 4 parallel streams of students next year: deferrals from 2019/20, deferrals from 20/21, new students 21/22 and increased students on short upskilling and reskilling courses. Faculties, Student Records and the Student Experience Directorate are currently working through the operational detail on how this will be delivered and how students might be recorded for college and sectoral funding bodies.